

## Amoretti and Epithalamion

### Sonnet LVII. Sweet warrior! when shall I have peace with you

Edmund Spenser (1552?–1599)

SWEET warrior! when shall I have peace with you  
High time it is this war now ended were  
Which I no longer can endure to sue,  
Ne your incessant batt'ry more to bear:  
So weak my powers, so sore my wounds, appear,  
That wonder is how I should live a jot,  
Seeing my heart through-lanced everywhere  
With thousand arrows, which your eyes have shot:  
Yet shoot ye sharply still, and spare me not,  
But glory think to make these cruel stours,  
Ye cruel one! what glory can be got,  
In slaying him that would live gladly yours!  
Make peace therefore, and grant me timely grace,  
That all my wounds will heal in little space.

### About the Poet

Edmund Spenser, (born 1552/53, London, England—died January 13, 1599, London), English poet whose long allegorical poem *The Faerie Queene* is one of the greatest in the English language. It was written in what came to be called the Spenserian stanza. Little is certainly known about Spenser. He was related to a noble Midlands family of Spencer, whose fortunes had been made through sheep raising. His own immediate family was not wealthy. He was entered as a

“poor boy” in the Merchant Taylors’ grammar school, where he would have studied mainly Latin, with some Hebrew, Greek, and music.

In 1569, when Spenser was about 16 years old, his English versions of poems by the 16th-century French poet Joachim du Bellay and his translation of a French version of a poem by the Italian poet Petrarch appeared at the beginning of an anti-Catholic prose tract, *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*; they were no doubt commissioned by its chief author, the wealthy Flemish expatriate Jan Baptista van der Noot. (Some of these poems Spenser later revised for his *Complaints* volume.)

The *Shepherd's Calendar* can be called the first work of the English literary Renaissance. Following the example of Virgil and of many later poets, Spenser was beginning his career with a series of eclogues (literally “selections,” usually short poems in the form of pastoral dialogues), in which various characters, in the guise of innocent and simple shepherds, converse about life and love in a variety of elegantly managed verse forms, formulating weighty—often satirical—opinions on questions of the day. The paradoxical combination in pastoral poetry of the simple, isolated life of shepherds with the sophisticated social ambitions of the figures symbolized or discussed by these shepherds (and of their probable readership) has been of some interest in literary criticism.